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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**STOCKTON DRUG TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO  
IMPRISONMENT FOR TEN YEARS IN COCAINE CASE**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott, announced today that BENJAMIN AGREDANO-MERCADO, age 28, of Stockton, was sentenced to imprisonment for 121 months as a result of his conviction on federal drug offenses. AGREDANO-MERCADO pled guilty on January 24, 2004, to six counts of distributing cocaine.

This case is the product of an extensive joint investigation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, California Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, Sacramento Police Department and Sacramento County Sheriff's Department.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Robert M. Twiss, who prosecuted the case, AGREDANO-MERCADO was indicted in 1998, but was a fugitive from 1998 until October of 2002. AGREDANO-MERCADO was arrested in Oakland, California when he attempted to re-enter the United States on a commercial flight from Mexico City.

AGREDANO-MERCADO was charged as one of many defendants in the John Wesley Jingles continuing criminal enterprise case. Jingles was convicted of distributing hundreds of kilograms of cocaine and cocaine base ("crack") in Sacramento, California and Mobile, Alabama. Jingles sent large amounts of cocaine by couriers on planes and in cars from California to Mobile, where he converted the cocaine to cocaine base, and took advantage of the higher price for crack cocaine in Alabama. Jingles went to trial in the Spring of 2001, was convicted of numerous drug trafficking, money laundering and interstate travel in aid of racketeering counts, and was sentenced to imprisonment for three life terms plus 620 years. Jingles' conviction was affirmed, and he is serving his life sentence.

AGREDANO-MERCADO was charged with being one of Jingles' suppliers of cocaine. He pled guilty to providing between ten and fifteen kilograms of cocaine to Jingles' organization. The cocaine which AGREDANO-MERCADO supplied to the Jingles' organization was delivered to co-conspirator Walter Dawson, and then converted to crack cocaine for distribution. Dawson also is serving a lengthy prison sentence.

A copy of this news release is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae/home>, select Press Releases.

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